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ENTERTAINMENT

Dylan Walsh talks about starring in 'Heated Rivalry' series, working with Hudson Williams and Connor Storrie

By **Markos Papadatos** Published February 4, 2026

Dylan Walsh in 'Heated Rivalry' Photo Credit: Sabrina Lantos, Max

Veteran actor Dylan Walsh ("Nip/Tuck") chatted about starring in the sports drama series "Heated Rivalry" on Max, where he plays Jared Hollander (the father of Hudson Williams' character).

"The important thing in life is not victory but combat; it is not to have vanquished but to have fought well," said Pierre de Coubertin, French Educator who was primarily responsible for the revival of the Olympic Games in 1894. This quote applies to actor Dylan Walsh.

The synopsis is: Two rival hockey players Shane Hollander (Hudson Williams) and Ilya Rozanov (Connor Storrie) are at the top of their game yet they face an unexpected challenge when they develop feelings for each other (and forbidden love), which complicates their hockey careers, and the sport's expectations.

'Heated Rivalry' experience

In the hit sports drama series "Heated Rivalry" Walsh portrays David Hollander, the father of Shane Hollander (played by Hudson Williams).

On being a part of this television show, which has become a global phenom, Walsh said, "Well, we had no idea it was going to become the success that it is."

"All of us going into it thought it was going to have a select audience," he noted.

"It was great to work with all of these great people! I will say that when I got there and I saw the boys, they were so committed and so good... I was hoping it would catch on," he elaborated.

"Still, I couldn't imagine that it would become what it has become," he added.

Playing David Hollander in 'Heated Rivalry'

On playing David Hollander, Walsh said, "Well, it's funny because Jacob Tierney, the writer and director, said that he cast me because he loved 'Nip/Tuck.' He told me that he wasn't asking me to do anything crazy in this series."

Working with Jacob Tierney as showrunner

Walsh praised Jacob Tierney, the writer, director and creator, for his artistic vision in bringing this series to life.

"Jacob told me what he needed is some normalcy and for my character to just process what was going on without any outrage. I think that's part of the success of the show," he elaborated.

"It's the love story, and there's a context that is somewhat safe. As Shane's father, he is lucky because I'm told by a lot of people (who come up to me and comment on this) that there is usually some trouble. It's not easy to come out," he explained.

"Jacob Tierney really made a decision to not do a cliché response, and I think that has worked out," he added.

Hudson Williams and Connor Storrie in 'Heated Rivalry' Photo Credit: Sabrina Lantos, Max

Working with Hudson Williams as his on-screen son

On working with Hudson Williams as his on-screen son, Walsh said, "First of all, Hudson is a real easy guy and he is so much fun to be around. There are no pretensions but he is also not a pushover."

"Hudson is who he is. He's got some idiosyncrasies with how he dresses and his sense of humor, but he is a lot of fun. I just adore him. Hudson was great as Shane, and I also like who he is as a person," he elaborated.

"The same holds true for Connor. Both actors stayed in character the whole time. Connor always spoke with a Russian accent, and both of them had to stay on that level of being together in this," he added.

Working with Connor Storrie as Ilya Rozanov

On working with Connor Storrie, Walsh said, "Connor is an excellent actor. He had to speak a lot of Russian, and he really, really learned it right at the end. He was still studying it and could actually speak Russian on his own with the accent."

"Connor never broke from the accent except for short periods of time, such as when we were having dinner. He is really talented actor," Walsh added.

Hudson Williams, Connor Storrie, Dylan Walsh and Daniela Franca in "Heated Rivalry" Photo Credit: Sabrina Lantos, Max

Working with Christina Chang as his on-screen wife

On working with Christina Chang as his on-screen wife, Yuna, Walsh said, "Christina was wonderful. She nailed that scene outside with Hudson... she was fantastic!"

The digital age

On being an actor in the digital age, Walsh said, "Well, I'm a little slow on it. I'm old school in terms of promoting myself. It wasn't something that I came up doing. It's something I'm a little sluggish about."

"I still just wait around for offers, but that's not enough anymore. These days, I'm catching up. My kids are way ahead of me technologically, so I rely on them," he noted.

"The digital age has changed the entertainment industry considerably," Walsh added.

Lessons learned from the 'Heated Rivalry' screenplay

On the lessons learned from the "Heated Rivalry" screenplay, Walsh reflected, "Well, it taught me that although I don't think I'm narrow-minded, I think that a good portion of the country still is. I expected the reaction to be kind of fragmented, and I also expected some backlash."

"To my surprise, people's positive comments were very reassuring. All kinds of people have responded to this series, and they are very excited about it," he elaborated.

"I've had people share their stories to me about being gay and coming out. I was very reassured by those responses especially from the younger generation," he added.

Advice for young and aspiring actors

For young and emerging actors, Walsh encouraged them "to study." "Acting is not something you just walk into, and it starts happening. Even if it does happen to you that way, go study, and take classes," Walsh said.

"I would recommend such places as New York or Los Angeles because that's where all the great acting teachers are," he noted.

"Also, you've got to have some movie. You've got to have some gumption. You've got to go for it. You can't be passive. That's why Hudson and Connor are great," he exclaimed.

"There are no pretensions. There are no egos, and they are such big stars now. Most importantly, they are both good people," he elaborated.

Success

Regarding his definition of the word success, Walsh said, "Success can mean different things. I do try to stress to people, that you can do everything you're committed to, you may work hard in your craft, but you never know what is going to happen, and 'Heated Rivalry' is a perfect example of that."

"I've done so many other things that I thought would make the deal, and then I did 'Heated Rivalry,' where I expected a small audience, but it became so huge. So, just do what you can do," he explained.

Message for his fans

For his fans and supporters, Walsh said, "Well, it takes a village. I would thank the fans for following me. Thanks for embracing all the different things I do, because as an actor, that's what I always look for. At the end of the day, I'm just an actor and I appreciate them following me."

Connor Storrie and Hudson Williams in "Heated Rivalry" Photo Credit: Sabrina Lantos, Max

Closing thoughts on 'Heated Rivalry'

Regarding the show "Heated Rivalry," Walsh expressed, "What I want people to get out of this series, is that it's not about sex. It's about love, and if it was a heterosexual couple, love would lead to some kind of physical manifestation."

"In this case, the characters are gay, and there is no real difference. I hope what the fans get out of it, is the audacity that Jacob Tierney had in shooting this series, but also just know that this love story can be safe," Walsh concluded.

Read More: "Heated Rivalry" Season 1 review

In this article: Actor, Connor Storrie, Digital Age, Drama, Dylan Walsh, heated rivalry, Hudson Williams, max, Series, Sports

ARTICLE BY
Markos Papadatos
Markos Papadatos is Digital Journal's Editor-at-Large for Music News. Papadatos is a Greek-American journalist and educator that has interviewed over 1,000 celebrities since 2000. Papadatos has interviewed some of the biggest names in music, entertainment, lifestyle, magic, and sports. He is an 19-time "Best of Long Island" winner, where for three consecutive years (2020, 2021, and 2022), he was honored as the "Best Long Island Personality" in Arts & Entertainment, an honor that has gone to Billy Joel six times.

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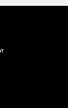
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